

SENSITIVE

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WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 6 November 1971

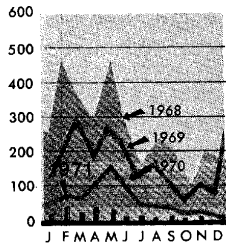
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For the President Only

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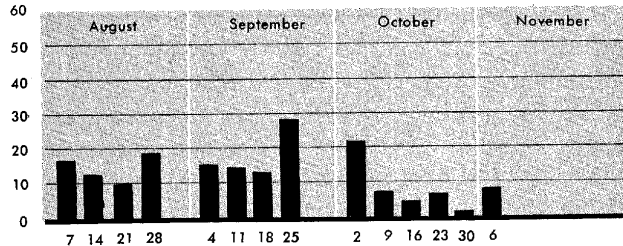
SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1971
Weekly average for each month



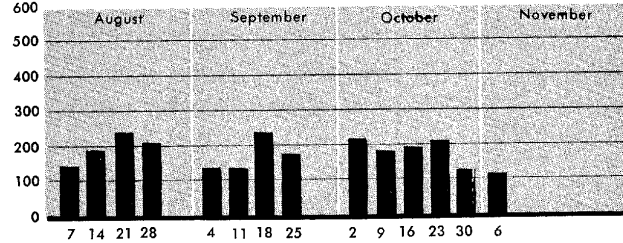
AUGUST 1971 - NOVEMBER 1971
Weekly data as reported

US BATTLE DEATHS



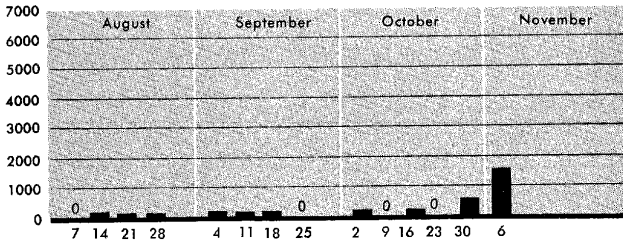
rose to eight from the six-and-a-half-year low of two reported last week.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS



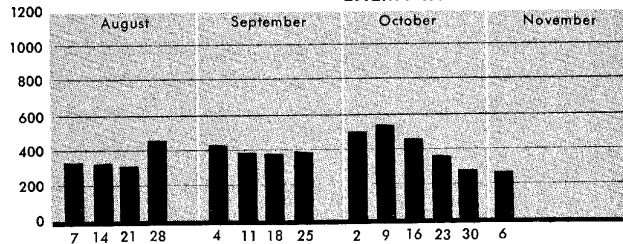
remained at an extremely low level as 106 were reported this week -- down from last week's 129. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.

INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE



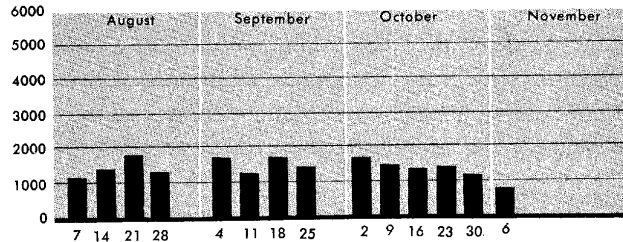
stand at two small, special purpose and three "gap fill" groups with some 1,750 personnel. The number of infiltrators noted since 1 October 1971 is now estimated at 2,300 to 3,000.

ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS



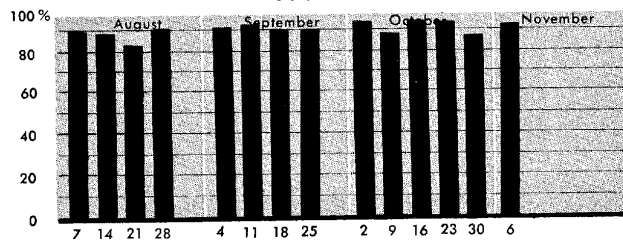
dropped to 249 from last week's two-year low of 253.

ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION



decreased from last week's 1,058 to 789 -- the lowest total since January.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS



as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces climbed to 93% from last week's 88%.

Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

In South Vietnam, enemy-initiated activity throughout the country has remained at the low levels which have now prevailed for almost three weeks. With the exception of the DMZ area, Communist main force units are not positioned to pose any serious threat to Allied forces or installations in the immediate future. The enemy does have a strong concentration of forces along or in the immediate vicinity of the DMZ and these could be committed to action with little prior warning. There are no indicators suggesting that any major enemy activity is imminent, however, and since the northeast monsoon -- i.e. coastal MR 1's rainy season -- has started, weather considerations further reduce the likelihood of major enemy tactical initiatives there in the near future.

During the week in Cambodia, military activity has continued at a moderate level. Most of the action occurred along the section of Route 6 between the villages of Prakham and Rumlong where, in the first days of their campaign, the Communists isolated eight Cambodian battalions and gained control of a four-mile stretch of the highway. Intense ground fire and poor weather has complicated attempts to relieve these units. In addition to attacks by fire and ground probes, on 27, 28, and 31 October, the Communists staged gas attacks which incapacitated 100 men in one Cambodian battalion. (This is the enemy's first known use of chemical warfare in Cambodia.) A Khmer Krom relief force moved from Skoun to within a few miles of Rumlong, where it was halted by an enemy ambush. A second Khmer Krom relief column from Kompong Thmar ran into even stiffer Communist opposition as it tried to push down Route 6 to Rumlong. These two relief columns made very little progress over the weekend. In other activities on 4 November, the Communists interdicted Route 5 in two places south of Battambang, digging trenches across the road and sabotaging an important bridge.

In Laos, friendly forces have maintained the initiative in military activity northeast of the Royal Capital at Luang Prabang and in the southern Panhandle. In the central Panhandle, an enemy unit training in the open was virtually destroyed when forward air controllers called in U.S. tactical air on it. On the Plaine des Jarres, light enemy shelling failed to disrupt government air supply operations and there was moderate action in eastern Xieng Khouang Province.

Enemy Infiltration

Personnel infiltration continued at a brisk pace during the past week as the Communists seem to have overcome the transportation difficulties caused by the recent flooding. Only two small, special purpose groups were detected moving toward South Vietnam, but three "gap-fill" groups were accepted, raising the total number of infiltrators for the week to about 1,750. Thus, the estimate of infiltrators destined for South Vietnam-Cambodia since 1 October 1971 stands at some 2,300 - 3,000. Heavier southward infiltration of men and materiel is expected shortly, since the augmentation of infiltration-associated elements and combat forces in the Lao Panhandle by up to 6,000 men appears to have been completed. These moves, along with other evidence of final preparations for the dry-season offensive, suggest that the infiltration campaign can now shift into high gear. The Communists, moreover, have increased infiltration to north Laos significantly in recent weeks. Since 15 October, 13 groups totalling from 4,100 to 5,000 men have been detected moving westward from North Vietnam to north Laos, where they will probably participate in the enemy's coming dry season offensive.

South Vietnam Developments

President Thieu informed a foreign visitor on 1 November that South Vietnam was now strong enough to defeat the North Vietnamese in a military confrontation and that the U.S. could withdraw all its infantry forces and end its combat role in South Vietnam by June or July of 1972. [REDACTED] Thieu stressed that the Allied troop withdrawal would have to be gradual, and be accompanied by a full-scale military assistance program which would modernize ARVN, especially in respect to heavier tanks and artillery.

Thieu envisaged that the U.S. would have to continue to provide air support -- helicopters, air transport, fighters, tactical air and strategic bombing -- until at least 1973, when he anticipates that the Communists will launch a strong offensive against South Vietnam. In a related development, [REDACTED] 25X1X4
 South Vietnam will shortly request U.S. support to increase the military manpower ceiling of 1.1 million men by an additional 50,000 troops. A new draft system, effective on 1 January, is expected to provide the new recruits, some of whom will be needed for at least one, and possibly two, new infantry divisions scheduled for deployment next year.

The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) results for the month of September show that 80.1 percent of the population (14.4 million of a total 18.6 million) were living in hamlets or urban areas rated as A or B. The gain of 3.8 percent over the August results brings the rating to a new high for 1971. It would probably be a new overall high as well, but no definitive statement of this can be made since the 1971 HES system is not statistically comparable to the earlier versions of the evaluation system. The improvements documented by HES are somewhat surprising in that they occurred in the face of both a threatened Communist step-up in activity and a major coefficient of confusion brought about by the GVN presidential election. The progress was also unusual in that it was relatively uniform throughout the country, with all four Military Regions indicating progress. Though nine out of the forty-four provinces did register some declines, only in Binh Duong did the drop appear large enough to create concern. While the 1971 goal of 95 percent of the population being rated A or B appears unlikely to be reached, it is clear that the GVN has at least temporarily surmounted the problem of apathy in its pacification drive. If the pacification program can use this achievement to restore the momentum that waned during the first half of 1971, prospects for long-run stability in the countryside will be increasingly bright.

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